

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6-8, 10-12, 14-16, 18-20, 22-24, and 26-31 are presently pending in the application. Claims 1, 3, 4, 6-8, 10, 15, 16, 18-20, 22-24, 26, 29, and 30 have been amended to more particularly define the invention. Claim 31 has been added to assure Applicant the degree of protection to which his invention entitles him. Claims 2, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, and 25 have been cancelled in the interest of expediting prosecution.

The amendments to claims 3, 4, 6-8, 10, 15, 16, 18-20, 22-24, 26, 29, and 30 are made only to assure grammatical and idiomatic English and improved form under United States practice and to conform with amendments to their respective parent claims, and are not made to distinguish the invention over the prior art or narrow the claims or for any statutory requirements of patentability. Further, Applicant specifically states that no amendment to any of those claims should be construed as a disclaimer of any interest in or right to an equivalent of any element or feature of the amended claim.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the indications that claims 7, 11, 15, 19, 23, 28 and 30 are allowable, and that claims 2-6, 8-10, 12-14, 16-18, 20-22, 24-26 and 29 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Lipka et al., U.S. Publication No. 2004/0014436 A1, and claim 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lipka, et al. in view of the admitted prior art of Fig. 1 of the instant application. The substance of claim 2 has been incorporated into claim 1, while an element from claim 1, not essential to patentability, has been deleted and placed in new claim 31, dependent from claim 1. The remaining claims have been amended to assure grammatical and idiomatic English and improved form under United States practice, as well as to conform

Serial No. 10/020,186
Docket No. SON-0521 US
SUZ.023

with the amendment of claim 1 and the cancellation of claim 2. It is accordingly submitted that all the claims are allowable.

The Office Action objects to a translation error in the disclosure. This has been corrected.

At the time this application was filed, the priority of Japanese Application No. 2000-387598 was claimed, and a certified copy of the priority application was submitted. The Office Action is marked to acknowledge the claim for priority, but is not marked to indicate receipt of the priority application. Acknowledgement of receipt of the priority application is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that claims 1, 3, 4, 6-8, 10-12, 14-16, 18-20, 22-24, and 26-31, all the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are allowable, and that the application is in condition for allowance. Such action would be appreciated.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary for allowance in a telephonic or personal interview.

To the extent necessary, Applicant petitions for an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency in fees, including

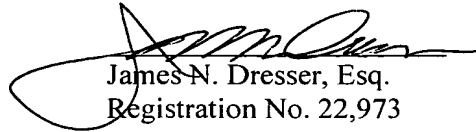
Serial No. 10/020,186
Docket No. SON-0521 US
SUZ.023

extension of time fees, or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account

No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

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